

Proclamation 5795 of April 13, 1988

National Stuttering Awareness Week, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The uniquely human ability to communicate thoughts through speech allows us to share our ideas almost as quickly as they occur, with little conscious effort. But for the more than three million Americans who stutter, speech is associated with struggle. Rapid-fire repetitions of sounds, prolonged vowels, and verbal blocks disrupt the smooth and easy flow of speech and limit the spontaneous exchange of ideas and feelings. Many stutterers suffer frustration and embarrassment that can lead to harmful emotional stress.

Stuttering has a tendency to be inherited, and it affects four times as many males as females. Children usually outgrow stuttering before reaching adulthood. When the disorder continues or begins in adults, it is considered chronic and very difficult to control.

Just what causes stuttering is not yet known, but research is providing clues. In normal speech, the brain and more than 100 muscles of the vocal system work together to produce fluent sounds. Within the larynx, one set of muscles contracts to pull the vocal folds apart and works in close coordination with the set of muscles that allows the folds to close. In stuttered speech, however, these muscle sets do not coordinate properly, preventing normal movement of the vocal folds.

Focusing on this specific malfunction, scientists at the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke (NINCDS) have developed a promising, but as yet experimental, treatment for severe chronic adult stutterers. Injections to the larynx temporarily paralyze one of the muscles, easing the disruptive tug-of-war between opposing muscles and thereby improving speech.

The NINCDS leads the Federal government's research effort on stuttering, funding projects around the country in addition to conducting studies in its own laboratories. Research supported by private voluntary health agencies adds to the growing pool of knowledge. These private organizations also provide invaluable counseling and other services to stutterers and their families. Together, Federal and private groups call attention to simple ways the public can help; for example, many stutterers actually improve their speech when listeners know to be patient and supportive.

To enhance public awareness of stuttering, the Congress, by Public Law 100-263, has designated the period of May 9 through May 15, 1988, as "National Stuttering Awareness Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the period of May 9 through May 15, 1988, as National Stuttering Awareness Week, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight,

and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5796 of April 13, 1988

Gaucher's Disease Awareness Week, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Gaucher's disease, the most common of a group of inherited disorders known as lipid storage diseases, afflicts more than 20,000 Americans. It most commonly strikes people of Eastern European Jewish descent, affecting approximately one in every 2,500 people in this group.

Investigators at the Federal government's National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke (NINCDS) discovered that Gaucher's disease is caused by the failure of the body to produce an enzyme needed to break down fatty substances called lipids that arise from the normal renewal of the body's cells and tissues. In Gaucher's disease, a specific lipid builds up in body tissues, causing enlargement of the spleen and liver, bone pain, and fractures. In severe cases, serious neurological disorders may occur.

NINCDS scientists and other investigators supported by both public and private funds have narrowed the search for effective management and treatment of this disease. It is now possible to identify carriers of Gaucher's disease. The gene responsible for producing the needed enzyme has been cloned and its structure in normal individuals and Gaucher's disease patients is being studied. Scientists are continuing to refine techniques for replacing the missing enzyme as a useful form of therapy. They are also examining methods that may eventually allow them to replace the defective gene and provide a permanent cure.

Gaucher's patients are further encouraged and sustained by the work of dedicated voluntary health agencies such as the National Gaucher Foundation. These groups provide information and services to patients and their families and work closely with the NINCDS to promote research. When Gaucher's disease is finally conquered, it will be thanks to the cooperative efforts of both private and Federal agencies.

To enhance public awareness of Gaucher's disease, the Congress, by Public Law 100-254, has designated the week beginning October 16, 1988, as "Gaucher's Disease Awareness Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning October 16, 1988, as Gaucher's Disease Awareness Week, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight,